

Seven Bowls of Wrath

The Song of Moses and the Lamb and the Decreation of the World

Revelation 15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for [with them the wrath of God is finished](#).

² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire-- and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.

³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!

⁴ Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed."

⁵ After this I looked, and [the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven](#) was opened,

⁶ and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.

⁷ And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever,

⁸ and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Rev 16:1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."

² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

⁴ The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood.

⁵ And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"

⁷ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!"

⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire.

⁹ They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.

¹⁰ The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish

¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

¹² The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east.

¹³ And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.

¹⁴ For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty.

¹⁵ ("Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!")

¹⁶ And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

¹⁷ The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

(Rev 15:1-16:17)

Weaving on a Loom

Weaving and the Torah

There are a lot of things in this world that I take for granted. Other people do them, so I don't need to. Not only do I not need to, but I also often think it is so unimportant to me even caring to know about what they do. [Take weaving](#) for instance. Until a few months ago, I knew next to nothing about the subject. I basically likened it to knitting or crocheting, except that you did it on a loom, of which I also knew next to nothing.

Then I met a new friend. He's a Jewish scholar living in Jerusalem. He contacted me after he saw that I kept downloading a rather complicated paper of his on Leviticus (apparently, I'm too lazy to find where I saved the file on my computer). He was curious that I would teach such a thing to ordinary people, as he said, even trained seminary professors and rabbis won't do that. It's just too complicated. He was impressed and invited me to begin [studying the Torah](#) (the five books of Moses) with him and some others. I accepted the invitation.

This is how I became interested in the subject of weaving. He told me that it is very clear that [the Torah was](#)

woven together on a *literary* loom, as it was a common practice known to the Jews until the third century.¹ In fact, the Hebrew word for a “literary composition,” *masekhet* (מַסֵּכֶת) means “a weave on a loom.”

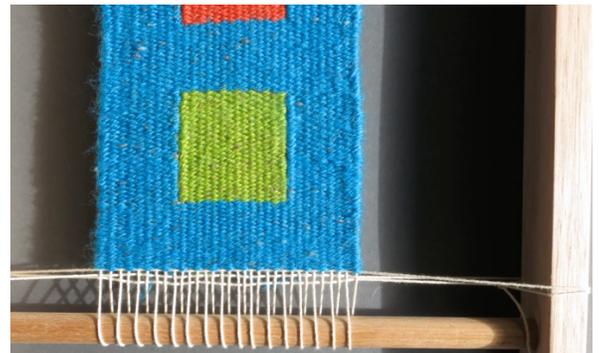
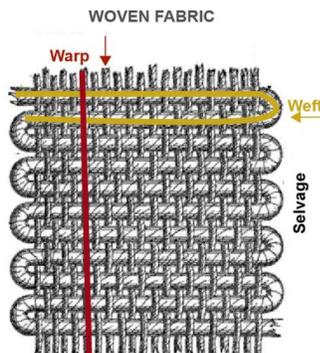
The way he explains it is that the Torah itself tells us that “The LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel ...’” (cf. Ex 33:5). In this way, there are two voices in the Torah: God’s and Moses’. Could it be that the Torah was spoken in such a way that it enables us to hear *both* voices? His idea is that the standard linear, verse-by-verse reading is Moses’ inspired voice telling the people in a straightforward manner all that God said. However, the Torah is also written as an almost infinitely complex weave, thus showing us in different ways, the voice of God.

Since this is going to be important for establishing what I think is going on in Revelation today, we need to understand a thing or two about weaving. Weaving takes place on a loom, an apparatus for making fabric by weaving yarn or thread. That apparatus can range from quite simple

¹ For this and what follows, see his to YouTube videos. Moshe Kline, “The Lord Spoke to Moses in Tables: Part 1,” *YouTube* (Nov 10, 2010), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4fnY52xkVg&t=278s>; and “The Lord Spoke to Moses in Tables: Part 2,” *YouTube* (Nov 10, 2010), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy7n_5amTn4&t=629s. This is also in a PDF. Moshe Kline, “The LORD Spoke to Moses in Tables,” https://www.academia.edu/3582164/The_Lord_Spoke_to_Moses_in_Tables.

to very complex (in order to make your weave go faster). A simple loom is basically a wooden frame that allows you to tie your warp threads to the top and bottom of the loom and then begin weaving.

Warp threads are **the vertical pieces** of yarn that are anchored to the top and bottom of loom. These are evenly spaced and then set so that you can begin weaving your weft threads over and under, going back and forth through every other warp thread. The **weft** threads are the horizontal threads. In traditional weaving, they completely cover the warp. You can still tell they are there, but they are covered so that you only actually see the weft. All this allows for intricate patterns and very strong material.



So how does this work in the Torah? Today we will look at **two related examples**. The first is **the days of creation**.²

² For the woven layout of the text, see Appendix A. This appendix comes from **Moshe Kline**, “The Woven Torah (English Edition): JPS 1917 Edition,” *chaver.com*, [https://www.chaver.com/Torah-New/English/Text/The%20Structured%20Torah%20\(JPS%201917\).pdf](https://www.chaver.com/Torah-New/English/Text/The%20Structured%20Torah%20(JPS%201917).pdf). You can also find the layout for the 10 Plagues in the same file under the heading, “Exodus Unit III (6:29-11:10).”

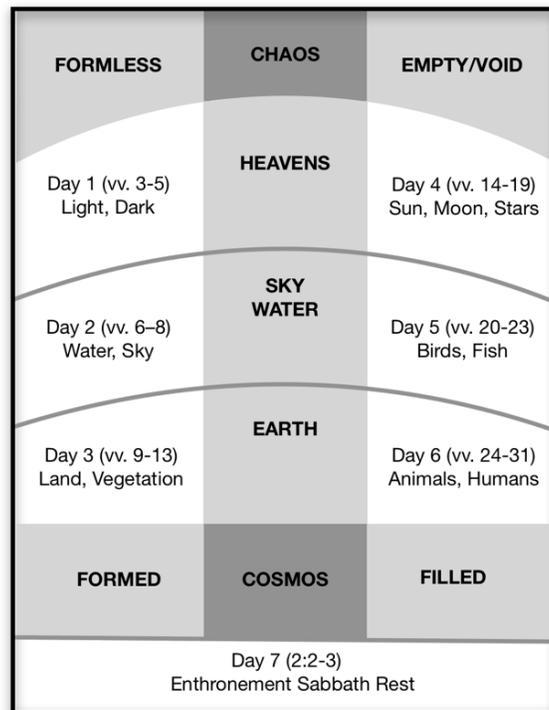
The Second is [the 10 plagues of Egypt](#). Both are woven texts, and both are intricately related to [Revelation 15-16](#).

The Creation Weave

Everyone knows that there are [seven days of creation](#). These creation days begin with a prologue, “[In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth](#)” ([Gen 1:1](#)). Then, [for six days](#), God creates: first day and light (day 1), then the sky which divides the waters above and below (day 2), then dry land (day 3), then he creates the lights in the heavens—sun, moon, and stars (day 4), then birds and fish (day 5), then finally, beasts and humans (day 6). Of course, on the 7th day God’s rests. This is the [linear, straight-forward reading](#) of the days of creation. It is easily accessible to anyone who knows how to read or listen.

But even without understanding any weaving imagery, almost all scholars have now recognized that there is [a deeper reading here](#). If you set [day 1 with day 4](#) you see that God creates the light and then the lights. If you set [day 2 with day 5](#) you see that God creates the divider, the sky between the waters and then the birds which go in the sky and the fish which go in the waters. If you set [day 3 with day 6](#) you see that God creates the land and plants and then

the beasts which go on the land and the people who eat the plants. Sometimes this has been called “forming” on the first three days and “filling” on the second three days, but such that they parallel one another.



But we can now take these thoughts and consider this as a weave. First, we need our literary loom to anchor our days of creation on the top and bottom. Perhaps this could be the first two verses (Gen 1:1-2) which is an introduction and the last three verses (2:1-3) which is the conclusion. The first word of the Bible is *bereshith* (in the beginning or possibly by the Firstborn). At the end of creation, God says he finished creating all the hosts (*tsaba*). It is to these that the two warp threads are anchored, which they must be, so that they don't move around during the weave. The warp threads are vertical

on the loom. These threads are the days themselves. We place days 1-3 in a vertical column on the left and days 4-6 in a vertical column on the right.

Now come **the horizontal weft threads**. There are three of them. These are not the days, properly speaking, because the days are the warp threads. Rather, the weft is the information of what happens during those days. Specifically, the parallel days 1 and 4 **both deal with light**. But the light is *heavenly* light, so we can say that they **both deal with heaven** or the celestial or the transcendent, the realm where God and the angels reside, but we do not properly belong. Days 3 and 6 **both deal with the earth**. As such, they are the opposite of the celestial. They are the terrestrial, the immanent, the mundane. Days 2 and 5 are in the middle, between 1-4 and 3-6. It is proper, therefore, that **they deal with the middle divider**—the sky and the birds. In this way, we have created a very simple weave where a three-tier world (above, middle, below) is created by the weft threads around the warp of the six days. This is something you might not necessarily notice if you were merely reading the text linearly. The weave creates a beautiful pattern that can be contemplated in itself that is not otherwise seen.³

³ For this and the look alike graphics below see n. 1.

The Three-Tiered Creation Weave

Positional Element of Pair	L Divinely named motionless singular	R Unnamed classes with local motion Plural
A Celestial-transcendent	1-LA day/ light	4-RA lights
B Middle divider	2-LB sky(the divider between waters above and below)	5-RB birds and fish occupants of sky and water
C Terrestrial-immanent	3-LC earth and plants	6-RC beasts and people

The Decreation Weave: The Plague-Signs of Egypt

The second weave we will look at is the 10 plagues of Egypt. Ten is obviously a different number than six (or seven), so it will have a slightly different look to the weave. In this case, rather than two, we have three warp threads. These three are anchored to the loom by the prologue where the LORD tells Moses that he will remove his hosts (*tsaba*) from Egypt (Ex 7:4) on the top and by the Moses and Aaron doing all these wonders before Pharoah, ending with the tenth plague (the firstborn; Ex 11:1-10) on the bottom. This is identical to the anchor of the days of creation. Each thread is introduced by its own repeating idea. In the first (plagues 1, 4, 7), Moses presents himself “in the morning.” In the second (plagues 2, 5, 8), Moses is told to “come” to Pharoah. In the third (plagues 3, 6, 9) there is no formal introduction.

The Nine Signs (Plagues)

Introduction	L Present Yourself in the morning	M Come	R None
Agent A Aaron points down	1-LA Blood	2-MA Frogs	3-RA Lice
B Middle-mixed no pointing	4-LB Mixture	5-MB Pestilence	6-RB Boils
C Moses points up	7-LC Hail	8-MC Locust	9-RC Darkness

Where this really gets interesting for our comparison to the days of creation is that when read as a weave, the **weft threads** reveal that the 10 plagues are actually *a reversal of the days of creation*, meaning that the plagues of Egypt are a symbol of *de-creation*, which makes sense because God is systematically destroying of worth about Egypt—the great man-power of earth at that time and he is removing his hosts, the opposite of creating the hosts in Gen 2:1.

First of all, we have three weft threads to compliment the three warp threads. Whereas in the days of creation, the days in order were the warp, in the plagues, the successive numbers are the weft.

Creation

Warp
 ↓ ↓
 1 4
 ↓ ↓
 2 5
 ↓ ↓
 3 6
 ↓ ↓

Plagues

— 1 2 3 →
 — 4 5 6 →
 — 7 8 9 →
 10

This means that the first row is **plagues 1-3**, the second row is **plagues 4-6**, and the third row is the **plagues 7-9**. Again, the 10th plague is what anchors the entire weave.

Now, in the first row (top), Aaron is told to **point his rod down** to the earth. In the third row (bottom), Moses is told to **point his staff up** to the heavens. The second row is a middle to which Aaron and Moses each point. So we have **an inversion** where earth is above and heaven is below. This is our **first signal of a de-creation**. Second, the plagues that correspond to Aaron pointing below are three plagues that come from the earth: blood, frogs, lice. Likewise, in third row where Moses points up, the three plagues come from above: hail, locust, and darkness. Again, the second row is things that come from the middle. This is our second signal that things are inverted. But we can say more.

**Negations of the Creation Weave
in the De-creation Weave**

A Earth (below)	1-LA Gatherings of water turn to blood	2-MA	3-RA Earth produces lice which attack men and beasts
B Divider (middle)	4-LB Divider becomes mixture	5-MB	6-RB Moses and Aaron mix above and below
C Luminescent (above)	7-LC Fiery hail- lights fall from sky	8-MC	9-RC Darkness replaces light
Epilogue	Death of the first born/ In the beginning		

Looking at our rows in reverse order (with the middle column, which does not point to creation, left out), we find a negation of the days of creation. The ninth plague brings **darkness**, which is a **reversal of the light** of Day 1. The seventh plague has **lights fall from the sky** as fiery hail, which reverses Day 4 where the **lights were placed in the sky**. The sixth plague sees **Aaron** the priest (earth) and **Moses** the prophet (heaven) **mixing** their work together to create boils by throwing soot (earth) into the air (sky), and this negates day 5 which fills the sky with **birds**. The fourth plague sees the divider (sky) filled with **a mixture**⁴ (maddeningly noxious insects) which negates Day 2 so that **the middle** divider is no longer present. The third plague has **the land** producing lice which attacks **the beasts** created on day 6. Finally, the first plague has the **waters** turning to blood, the same **waters** that were gathered to create the land.

Creation	
In the Beginning (<i>reshith</i>)	
Day 1 Light from Darkness	Day 4 Lights (fiery hail) Falls from the sky
Day 2 Heaven and earth divided	Day 5 Middle (sky) Filled with birds
Day 3 Waters Gathered (to create the land)	Day 6 Creatures created On the land
All the hosts (<i>tsabaot</i> צבאות) were finished	

10 Plagues as Decreation		
I will remove my hosts (<i>tsabaot</i> צבאות) from Egypt		
Plague 1 (Day 3) Waters Turn to blood	Plague 2	Plague 3 (Day 6) Land produces lice, attacks land-creatures
Plague 4 (Day 2) Divider becomes mixture (flies?)	Plague 5	Plague 6 (Day 5) Aaron/Moses mix above and below (soot into sky) for boils
Plague 7 (Day 4) Lights (sun, moon, stars) fixed in the sky	Plague 8	Plague 9 (Day 1) Darkness from light
Plague 10: Plague of the Firstborn (<i>reshith/bekor</i>)		

⁴ ‘*arov* occurs only here, and the only plausible derivation is from the verbal root that means “to mix.”

This entire series of plagues **returns Egypt to primal chaos**. It is a **Decreation**, a reversal of the Creation of Genesis 1. In this way, the two stories are complementary to one another. God must destroy Egypt in order to create his new people (his new host) who will be prepared and made fit to enter his Promised Land.

Revelation 15:1-16:17 -- Context and Structure

Rather than look at Revelation 15 by itself, I've chosen to look this time at it and most of ch. 16. In our idea that there are seven cycles in Revelation, 15-16 form **the totality of the fifth cycle**. It's not that you couldn't do 15 by itself. It is its own self-contained unit of thought.

- A. Angels seven
- B. having plagues seven, the last
- C. because in them is *finished*
- D. the *passion of God* (v. 1).
- E. Victors sing song of Moses and the Lamb (vv. 2-4).
- X. I saw: Temple opened, seven angels with seven plagues; seven angels receive bowls (vv. 5-7a).**
- E'. Angels wear clean, bright linen with golden sashes.
- D'. full of the *passion of God* (v. 7b).
- C'. no one can enter the temple until *finished*
- B'. the seven plagues
- A'. of the seven angels (v. 8b).⁵

⁵ Peter J. Leithart, *Revelation*, 112. **NOTE:** He gets this chiasm by looking at the Greek word order and it is not something easily seen in most if any English translations.

The thing is, **the center** of the chapter appears to be talking about **seven angels** with **seven plagues** which are put into **seven bowls**. More sevens, just like the Bible begins at creation. We don't get the specifics about the angels and bowls until ch. 16. Therefore, it makes sense to broaden our study to include the specifics. When we do, we discover that we can **compare these seven bowls to the seven trumpets** of the third cycle. They are parallel. **“The first four bowls, like the first four trumpets, result in devastation on the four major regions of the world: dry land, sea, fresh water, and sky ... But the bowls result in more severe judgments than did the trumpets. The trumpet judgments typically affected a third of the area, but the bowls affect the whole.”**⁶

A. Cycle 1: Church Militant (Chapters 1-3).

B. Cycle 2: The Seven Seals (Chapters 4-7).

C. Cycle 3: The Seven Trumpets (Chapters 8-11).

D. Cycle 4: The Persecuting Dragon and the Church (Chapters 12-14).

C'. Cycle 5: The Seven Bowls (Chapters 15-16).

B'. Cycle 6: The Fall of Babylon and the Churches Vindication (Chs. 17-19).

A'. Cycle 7: The Church Triumphant (20-22)

Revelation 15 is itself **a transitional chapter**. Obviously, it introduces chapter 16. However, it also links structurally all the way back to chapter 12:

⁶ **Vern S. Poythress**, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000), 153.

- A. Signs in heaven: The dragon, the woman, and the child, 12:1-17
- B. Beast from the sea, 13:1-10
- C. Beast from the land, 13:11-18
- D. Lamb on Zion, 14:1-5
- C'. Three angelic announcements, 14:6-11 (or 6-13)
- B'. Harvest, 14:12-20 (or 14-20)
- A'. Sign in heaven: Angels with bowls, 15:1-4⁷

Specifically, **Rev 15:1-4** completes the great war that was described in Revelation 12ff. The direct link is between **15:1** and **12:1, 3** where both talk about “a great sign in heaven.” But as Leithart says, “At the beginning of the sequence, the dragon and woman are in heaven. In the course of chapter 12, both leave. When 15:1 returns to a great sky sign, it’s not the dragon but seven angels bearing the seven last plagues.” Whereas vs. 1 takes us back to chapter 12, **vv. 2-4** take us back to the beginning of chapter **14:1-5**. Previously, the 144,000 on Zion heard music from heaven, and began to learn the words to the new song. Now, the harvested saints just reaped in the wheat and wine reapings are singing “the song of Moses and the Lamb.”

Putting all these threads of this in between chapter together, we can look at it this way:

Great sign in heaven (completes 12–15), 15:1a.

Seven angels with seven plagues (anticipates 16), 15:1b.

Saints in song (completes 14), 15:2–4.

Seven angels with seven bowls (introduction to 16), 15:5–8.⁸

⁷ Leithart, 2:111. Also at https://theopolisinstitute.com/leithart_post/structure-in-revelation-12-15/.

⁸ Leithart, 2:112.

Revelation 15:1-4 – The Song of Moses and the Lamb

Revelation 15:1 begins, “Then I saw another sign in heaven.” This is the third and last time these words are found in Revelation (again, see 12:1, 3). The sign John sees is “great and amazing” or “marvelous” or “wonderful.” This is the only chapter we find such language in. We are building to a crescendo.

The Apostle sees “seven angels with seven plagues.” Now, we’ve just seen six angels and a seventh heavenly figure in the previous chapter. This is clearly a tie-in to this. But of course the entire book needs can be read this way. The seven churches see the Lamb unseal seven seals of his great scroll. That seventh seal then becomes seven trumpets, announcing the judgment and intensifying the visions. The seventh trumpet then becomes seven bowls of God’s wrath, and this is what we are working our way towards in the announcement of these seven angels, for it says these angels carry with them seven “plagues.”

This word “plague” (*plēgē*) is used in the Exodus of the *Plagues of Egypt* (Ex 11:1; 12:13 LXX). We’ve seen those today, haven’t we? Its interesting that in the first use of it in

that story, in the very same verse we read, “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Yet *one plague more* I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely’” (Ex 11:1). In this last plague, God’s wrath is finished with Egypt. That’s precisely what John says here for these plagues “are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.”

What John sees next is “what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire.” The sea of glass is a hardened sea. This comes from the Exodus as well. Moses sings that the deep “congealed” (Ex 15:8), that is it became semi-solid, hard. The rabbis said it became “a crystallized ... kind of glass.”⁹ The idea of fire comes from Daniel 7 (again). Just after the beast comes out of the sea which is stirred up because of it (Dan 7:2-8), Daniel sees the heavenly throne room and a “stream of fire” coming out before the LORD. This is the fire of judgment, as the court is about to hold session and judge the beast! This is precisely what is happening here now too.

For John also sees “those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name” (Rev 15:2). The

⁹ G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 792.

sea-monster, **Leviathan**, has tried his best to attack the saints, but they have prevailed through their willingness to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, even if it be head first into suffering or even death. Now, they stand as **the conquerors**, beside (or better, “**on**”) the glassy sea. The sea-monster has not prevailed, but has been boxed in the hardened sea of glass, unable to defeat his foes. Remember, both Leviathan (Satan) and **Egypt** (and other nations) are the sea-monster in the OT. The battle has just been fought on the seas of the nations, on their turf, and the saints have overcome it through the testimony of Jesus. I’ve been saying that this takes place **throughout the church age**, and not merely in 70 AD or at the end of time, but those and every time in between, for this is about **the totality of the saints** and not just a few at the beginning or the end.

Now they are pictured all together “**with harps of God in their hands.**” The harps that were being played from heaven by, apparently, heavenly beings (**14:2**) are **now in the hands of the conquering saints** and it says, “**They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.**”

Moses’ song: Exodus 15—the song of the horse and rider thrown into the sea. It is immediately preceded by the

command that Moses was the servant of God (**Ex 14:31**). The song of God overpowering the great natural and supernatural enemies of Israel while his own people crossed safely on dry land. The song of God the man-warrior who fights for Israel. That man-warrior Angel of the LORD in Moses' day has become **the Lamb** of God in our own, and he has conquered the beast through his death and resurrection. The Gospel. Jesus has won.

The words of their song are, “Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your Name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” This is their “**new song**” (**14:3**). And yet, it is an old song.

Like Exodus 15, it extols God's attributes. Like **Deut 32**, which is also a song of Moses, it **praises God for his righteous judgment of the nations**. In fact, the whole thing is a collection of snippets from the OT:

Rev 15:3-4	OT Quotes/Allusions
“Great and amazing are your deeds”	“Great and wonderful plagues” (Dt 28:59 LXX), predicting future judgment as plagues of Egypt.
“O Lord God the Almighty!”	“The LORD appeared to Abram ... ‘I am God Almighty’” (Gen 17:1)

“Just and true are your ways”	“All his ways are justice” (“true” in LXX; Dt 32:4)
“O King of the nations!”	“Who would not fear you, O King of the nations?” (Jer 10:7)
“Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your Name?”	“Who will not ... glorify your Name” “For you alone are holy”
“For you alone are holy”	“So that all the nations will come and worship before you” (Ps 86:9-10)
“All nations will come and worship you”	
“For your righteous acts have been revealed”	“The LORD has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations” (Ps 98:2)

If it is snippets from the OT, then **how is it new?** It is new, not because the Lord had not done things like this in the past, it is new because those things were **only types** of what God is doing in Christ. Specifically with the Exodus, “**The saints praise the Lamb’s victory as the typological fulfillment of that to which the Red Sea victory pointed.**”¹⁰ What Jesus has done now is **infinitely more significant** than what he did in the OT through the types of Moses, Joshua, Israel, Egypt, and the Red Sea. Why? Because those older victories were **not capable** of bringing finality to the conquering saints. This one is, because in it Jesus has **overcome death, sin, and the devil** once-for-all. Nothing more needs to be done. Now, it is just a matter of the saints proclaiming down the corridors of time to all the nations this victory, and when

¹⁰ Beale, 792.

that is fully accomplished, all the saints will sing the song that many have begun already.

Revelation 15:5-16:17 – Decreation

Revelation 15:5-8 – The Heavenly Sanctuary and Golden Bowls

It is vital now to put this “song of Moses” with everything else we will look at today. We begin with [the rest of this interlude](#) that is Rev 15. It begins a new section. “[After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened](#)” ([Rev 15:5](#)). This “[tent of witness](#)” language may sound unfamiliar. This is the translation the LXX gives to something called “[the tent of meeting](#)” in the days of Moses. It is unclear if this is the same tent as the tabernacle or a separate tent and scholars are divided.¹¹ Whatever the case, it is clear that it is [the LORD’s house](#) on earth and that this was the place from which he spoke to his servant.

Such is the heavenly counterpart. “[Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests](#)”

¹¹ [Beale](#) says it is the same (*Revelation*, 801); [Heiser](#) says it is different (*Unseen Realm*, 173 n. 8).

(Rev 15:6). This is the center of the chapter and the foreshadowing of ch. 16. They are holy angels (white clothing, bright linen, golden sashes). They are priestly in attire. Their plagues are therefore meant to purify whatever they touch, much like the beast in Daniel 7:11 is purified (destroyed) by fire or Egypt is purified (destroyed) by the plagues of the Egypt and the Sea.

They have contact with the four living creatures, which we have seen are symbolized in the heavens by the cardinal signs of the zodiac (north, south, east, west). One of these creatures, it does not say which, gave the seven angels seven golden bowls. It makes sense. They are in the sanctuary and God had Moses create golden bowls for the tabernacle (Ex 25:29). This reinforces the holy, priestly language taking place. These are not ordinary bowls, much less evil bowls. They are the most holy objects of the sanctuary, and they exist for the purpose of purification and sacrifice.

Finally, “The sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished” (Rev 15:8). Smoke comes up in the tabernacle because of incense, which is a kind of sacrifice (Ps 141:2). This incense came from a very special fire that was

lit by God himself outside the Holy Place on the Altar in the court (**Lev 9:24**). It was also a sign of God's presence, which is why **no one was allowed to go inside**. As the Nadab and Abihu story demonstrates, if you go in with the wrong fire to this place, you yourself will be consumed with Unquenchable Fire from God and die. In other words, God is in the house, his great sacrifices are being performed, and everyone needs to beware of what they are treading upon at this moment. All of this leads me to conclude, no wonder John called it great and amazing. It's a glimpse that would have made Moses tremble.

Revelation 16:1-17 – The Seven Bowls of Wrath

Chapter 16 now takes us to the pouring out of these bowls upon the libation sacrifices that cleanse the evil earth. We begin with **a loud voice from the temple** commanding the seven angels (**Rev 16:1**). Is it the Father? Is it the Lamb? Is it commanding the seven-fold Spirit of God or created heavenly angels or angelic human messengers? Do we need to choose?

“Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.” This idea of bowls of wrath is found **in Isaiah**

and it is closely associated with **the cup**. God says to Jerusalem prior to its captivity, “**Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering**” (**Isa 51:17**). Judgment begins with the house of God. **70 AD** and purifying **the churches** of false teachers are two such activities in the age of Messiah. But it doesn't end there. Judgment is also poured out on the **pagan enemies** of God, as we clearly learn in the Exodus: Egypt and Leviathan.

“**So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image**” (2). We are brought back to chs. 14 and 15 and the mark of the beast where we learned that anyone who does not have the mark of God has, by birth-right, this evil mark.

“**The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea**” (3). At the end of ch. 14 we saw the blood of the saints piling up so high and so much that no war-horse anywhere could escape it. There is no further comment.

“The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood” (4). This one does comment. In fact, it is three verses long. “And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, ‘Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!’” (5-6). This resembles the song of Moses and the Lamb, but goes further in saying that God’s judgments have gone out against those who have shed the blood of the saints and prophets in an act of evil anti-Communion.

There are a few things to point out here. First, the end says, “It is what they deserve.” This is a nod to the *lex talionis*—an eye for an eye. God’s Judgment is never what someone does not deserve, but it rather exactly what they have done being returned in favor by the court of heaven. Anyone who says God is unjust to judge sinners has no idea what they are talking about. There is a reason God gave Moses this law, because it reflects the very justice and holiness of God.

Second, this is a nod to Jesus. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!” (Matt 23:37). Again, we see Jerusalem come to

the forefront, and remember that we saw that Babylon is, First, Jerusalem in Revelation. Only after that is it Egypt or Sodom or America or China or anyone else. This is referring to God's own people who never trusted him, but rather destroyed his very messengers. Hence, it takes us again to 70 AD and the destruction of the second temple, the termination of the old covenant, and the judgment of the nation.

But are they the only ones that have killed the saints and prophets? Hardly. **Pharoah** miserably mistreated the people of God. **Nebuchadnezzar** and **Darius** both tried to kill them in a fiery furnace and a lion's den. **Nero** went after the Christians in unspeakable ways, dipping them in wax and lighting them on fire to line his driveway, beheading them, and crucifying them upside down. History is littered with the bones of the martyrs at the hands of Gentile tyrants. But it is precisely in persecution and martyrdom that our blood is given over to the tyrants as a bowl of wrath in the judgmental sacrifice and justice of God who makes them drink it down to the dregs, to stumble and stagger in their own wicked stupor, and finally to perish eternally on the last day.

But this comment on the third angel's pouring his bowl into the rivers and springs to become the bloody sacrament is not yet finished, for it says, “And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!’” (Rev 16:7). Remember that below the altar is the “souls of the martyrs” (Rev 6:9). This is their collective voice personified as the burning sacrificial altar. They were crying, “How long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” Now they receive the answer. God has heard their cries. He has not failed to answer in judgment.

“The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire” (16:8). This terrifying image also has an inspired commentary. “They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory” (9). It is always remarkable that justice does not do what a lot of people think it must. We think, how could someone not repent with such terrible judgment upon their head? This thought fails to understand human depravity. Repentance rarely comes like this. It comes from the Gospel, from the good news, from seeing oneself a sinner with a way out, not from being punished

with no hope. It comes from grace and mercy and kindness that is undeserved, not from punishment and justice and wrath that is.

“The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness” (10). Again, we have commentary. “People gnawed their tongues in anguish and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds” (11). This comment intensifies the previous point. The pain that lingers such that a person gnaws their tongue does not bring repentance. Punishment, especially final punishment, does not bring repentance for the ungodly. Only discipline from a heavenly father that you already know and love can do that, for in this you can actually see and understand his reasons for it. Otherwise, you fail to see clearly and in that cloudy insanity one does not realize either their own rebellion and/or God’s holiness properly. All is muddied through the heart of pride bent on stubbornly refusing the kindness of God in Christ.

“The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and

out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ('Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!') And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon" (12-16). There is way too much here to comment on today, this will be a major focus of our next study. So simply listen to how not only do the bowls of wrath cause a person to curse God, if given the chance, it kindles in them a fire, **enraging them** all the more to attack Christ and his church. We will have several more studies where we will think about this specific bowl in the future.

Finally, "The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, 'It is done!'" (17). I should mention that hail is associated with this final bowl (21). The seventh bowl is poured, bringing to a conclusion what began way back in 15:1 with the great and amazing sign of seven angels and seven bowl "for with them the wrath of God is finished."

- A) Seven angels with seven last plagues, for **in them the wrath of God is finished** (15:1-16:1)
- B) The **first six bowls poured out** (16:1-12)
- C) The third interval period: three frog spirits **gather the kings to the battle** (16:13-14)
- D) “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (16:15)
- C’) And they **gathered them together** to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon (16:16)
- B’) The **seventh poured out his bowl** into the air (16:17a)
- A’) A loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, **“It is done!”** (16:17b)¹²

Revelation 16:1-17 – Decreation

Now, I’ve obviously skipped over **a ton of speculative ideas** about what these bowls might be in the future. Harmful sores? Is this some **vaccine** gone awry? Every single living thing in the oceans dies? Is this because the sun goes **supernova**? Is this why there is such profound darkness that comes? Or maybe some **sun-spot flare** roars off its photosphere and the corona blast destroys our ozone layer and incinerates mankind? If you think about any of these and so many other speculative thoughts about the future, it

¹² Edited from **Christine Smith**, “Chiastic Structure of the Seven Bowls of Wrath,” *A Little Perspective* (Dec 30, 2016): <https://www.alittleperspective.com/chiastic-structure-of-the-seven-bowls-of-wrath/>.

just isn't possible, especially if you are reading is chronologically. It's scientifically impossible.

Instead, what John is doing is going [back to the Plagues of Egypt](#) and [to the Creation before it](#). What John is doing is apocalyptically, in the manner of the prophets of old, telling us that [God is undoing the creation](#) he has made. That's the punishment. It is Decreation.

When you are thinking about it, it is self-evident that when you hear about [water becoming blood](#), [sores](#), [darkness](#), [frogs](#), and [hail](#) that we have some kind of relationship to the plagues of Egypt. Besides, the people are singing the *song of Moses*, which makes it absolutely clear. One possible way to connect them is as follows:¹³

Comparing the Plagues of Egypt and the Seven Bowls			
Plagues of Egypt		Seven Bowls	
1	Waters turned to blood	2, 3	Salt/Fresh water become blood
2	Frogs	6	Three unclean beasts (one is frogs)
3	Lice	6	
4	Flies	6	
5	Death of cattle	4	Sun scorches man and beast
6	Boils/sores	1	Malignant sores
7	Hail	7	Hail
8	Locusts	4	Severe famine
9	Darkness	5	Darkness
10	Death of firstborn	7	Those without the Lamb's blood die

¹³ This is my rendering of an old .gif I found on Google Images. There is no author.

In it, perhaps the most interesting idea is that the sixth angel has three unclean beasts that correspond to frogs (explicitly) and lice and flies (implicitly). Three sixes gives you ... 6 6 6. The point is, theologically speaking, God is sending a new “Plagues of Egypt” upon the earth and the point of that is Decreation. The whole world is coming undone. Decreation is seen even more obviously when comparing the seven bowls to the seven days of creation:

Comparing the Days of Creation and the Seven Bowls			
Days of Creation		Seven Bowls	
1	The earth is everything other than God’s dwelling	1	Poured out on the earth
2	Waters above and below are separated	2	Poured out on the sea
3	Separated land and sea, called land to sprout grasses and fruit trees	3	Rivers, land-water that makes the land fruitful
4	Sun, moon, stars fixed in the heavens	4	Sun scorches
5	Sea monsters swarming things in sea and land	5	Plague of darkness and sores in the kingdom of the beast, the sea-monster (Rev 13:1)
6	Beasts Adam and Eve	6	Euphrates dried up, dragon, beast, and false prophet fight kings of the east, a new Adamic army entering by the east, not “naked” who fight the enemy.
7	Rest	7	City splits, islands removed, mountains hide, hailstones—“It is done” ¹⁴

¹⁴ This list summarizes [Leithart](#), 2:134. Earlier I said that the seven bowls parallel the seven trumpets, and the trumpets also parallel creation. For a good summary see [Steven Felix-Jager](#), “In the End God Un-created the World: Order & Chos in the Book of Revelation,” *Quadrum* (2019),

Some of these connections are obviously tighter than others. But we should remember, this is **a new thing** God is doing. He is decreating the sinful world, returning it to the primeval chaos, undoing each day of creation with plagues that undid Egypt and sent that great power to the same state of nothingness.

As we think about these things, **three things strike me** in the parallels in both John's Gospel and earlier in Revelation. **First**, just where we have our song, as the redeemed sing "**Just and true are your ways**" and a couple verses later God is said to "**live forever**" (**Rev 15:3, 7**), Jesus tells the disciples in the parallel, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life**" (**John 14:6**). Here, we find all three ideas. Jesus is **the way**; this is God's Way. In Acts, "**The Way**" becomes how the Christians are identified (**Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22; 25:3**). The way is "**true**" because Jesus is the Truth. There is no falsehood in his word or his ways. And if you listen to him and know what he has done, you will see that he is the only Way that leads to life, because he comes from the God who **lives forever**. John is intentionally crafting his two books to parallel this song of Moses and the Lamb to mirror

https://www.academia.edu/40853837/In_the_End_God_Un_created_the_World_Order_and_Chaos_in_the_Book_of_Revelation, esp. pp. 32-34.

Jesus' teaching about himself. Have you heard this good news and repented of your sins, knowing that God tells you that Jesus is the way out of the disasters of the seven bowls of God's wrath? Trust that he will, pray to him in repentance of your sins, and know that he is true and will not go back on his word.

Second, and in a tight parallel to what we've just seen, right where we hear, "True and righteous are your judgments" (Rev 16:7), we see in the parallel, "He [the Holy Spirit] will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (John 16:8). And so, reinforcing what we've just said, there is a judgment coming, even as it has already fallen upon many who have died judged in their sin. But God has sent the Holy Spirit to convict people when they hear this word that is righteous in meeting out eye for eye, tooth for tooth, giving to them what they deserve. As John says in John 3:19, "This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." But the Spirit of God teaches a person who is humble that this is sin and as such, through the Gospel of Jesus shows them the way of life in Christ. Is this not something you would want above all other things, eternal

life rather than judgment upon judgment that only makes you angrier and angrier forever? Pray to the Spirit and he will hear your prayer and save you.

Finally, the parallel to **the bowls and cup of God's wrath** (**Rev 16:19**) is found in the exact match from the center of the book in the Lamb who will lead them to **fountains of living waters** (**7:17**). It is no coincidence that God rested on the seventh day and at the end of the seventh bowl being poured out, **"it is done."** It is no coincidence that the death of the **firstborn** was overcome by the **blood** poured out on the doorframes of the **Passover Lamb**. We have seen in the very heart of Revelation that we conquered **"by the blood of the Lamb"** and by the **"testimony"** of the saints that Jesus brings us to living waters. It is through this conquering of the beast and its image and the number and mark of Christ that God's people stand victorious on the glassy sea mixed with fire and sing with Moses and Miriam, **"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and rider he has thrown into the sea"** (**Ex 15:1; 21**). And in the singing of the undoing of creation, God creates a new people as **new creations**, made in the image of Jesus, who are being conformed into the perfect image of his Father. And they shall never be undone. May the Spirit make it so.

Appendix 1: Genesis 1:1-2:3 Laid Out as a Weave

COLOR KEY: Here are the colors which point to the linguistic pattern that is sometimes employed in a three part row to note the linguistic middle. Key words in the first and second segments are marked by this color. Key words in the second and third segments are marked by this color. The result is that the middle segment will have words marked with both colors.

Sometimes this highlight is used to indicate a repeating word or phrase within a segment which has led to subdividing the segment.

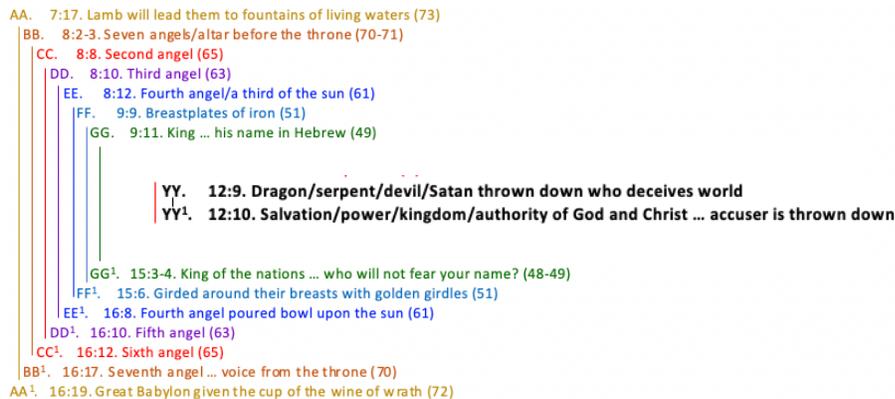
The layout of the text in two-dimensional format leads to the identification of linguistic and substantial links between segments in the same warp thread (column). Such parallels are marked with this color.

There are two types of highlighting employed to mark linguistic indicators of the boundaries of a Unit, closure and chiasm. Closure between the first weft thread and the last is marked by this color. Two colors are employed to mark a chiasm. This color indicates the half chiasm created by the connection between the upper left segment and the lower right segment. This color indicates the connection between the upper right and lower left half of the chiasm.

1 _κ	1 _ι
1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.	1:2 Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.
2 _κ	2 _ι
A 1:3 And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light. 1:4 And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 1:5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. {P}	A 1:14 And God said: 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; 1:15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. 1:16 And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; and the stars. 1:17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 1:18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. 1:19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. {P}
B 1:6 And God said: 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' 1:7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. 1:8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. {P}	B 1:20 And God said: 'Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.' 1:21 And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that creepeth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after its kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was good. 1:22 And God blessed them, saying: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.' 1:23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. {P}
C i 1:9 And God said: 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. 1:10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas; and God saw that it was good.	C i 1:24 And God said: 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after its kind.' And it was so. 1:25 And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.

<p>ii 1:11 And God said: 'Let the earth put forth grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth.' And it was so. 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. 1:13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. {P}</p>	<p>ii 1:26 And God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.' 1:27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. 1:28 And God blessed them; and God said unto them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth.' 1:29 And God said: 'Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed--to you it shall be for food; 1:30 and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is a living soul, [I have given] every green herb for food.' And it was so. 1:31 And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. {P}</p>
3κ	3λ
<p>2:1 And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.</p>	<p>2:2 And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God in creating had made. {P}</p>

Revelation Chiasm:



John Parallels:

14:6 "I am the way , the truth , and the life "	15:3, 7 "just and true are Your ways ... God who lives forever"
16:8 "He will judge of sin, righteousness , and judgment "	16:7 "true and righteous are Your judgments "

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